

the mass art paper

ISSUE #6

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NOTES ON ENVIRONMENT: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE OTHER SOME PROBLEMS & ICONOGRAPHIES OF GUILT TYPICAL

(Taken somewhat hurriedly from my notebook)
What is our relation to the natural environment? It seems to me that guilt and illusion (utopias) and resultant violence are continuous threads or better mirrors of the relationship of Americans to their environment. The guilt is our inability to acknowledge and enter into relationship or dialogue with the beauty and potency, the reality, the landscape. Guilt manifests itself in hyper-activity which seeks to cover itself. This covering or rejection either through illusion or material is our mania of diaspora or spreading out in space. Covering is the expression and the underlying guilt strikes violently at this suppression. Now the zone or interface of this cycling combat is the environment.

Let's get at this guilt. I doubt if we can get at it directly. The problem is close to the myth of the Garden and the separation of us from a basic unity. (We chose the tree of knowledge and death rather than the tree of life.) The myth reflects our central problem. Somehow we have known a deep separation other than parental... (We lift our hand between our eye and the sun- thus shadow, we uncover power to reject the earth.) The quest for power over

material has developed extraordinarily. We do not create images of the sun but real ones (hydrogen bombs). We wish to control life not through a sense of communalism but by isolating the structure of the gene. We wish to reject gravity and float. Power over matter and structure confronts us. The environment has become a psychological mirror and mask- it becomes a reflection of our unconscious. Our possession of power manifests itself upon the environment. But guilt and anxiety gnaw at this pride which in turn reinforces the compulsion to dominate. Thus through our projection of guilt and attendant anxiety upon the natural environment it disappears or is covered. On this disappearance we are faced with a double problem. First, what and where is the natural environment? (Not our illusion of it.) And then the fundamental issue: What is our relationship to this other, this environment? As the other, the truly separate in itself disappears we are lost in the dimness of our own reflections. Where am I? What can I really do? We return to a question: Are we coexistent with, convergent toward, divergent from, or congruent to nature or the natural environment-the other? How can we establish some basis for knowing this relationship?

Lowry Burgess

CREDIT BOX

Editor.....Barbara DuVal
General Critic.....Elaine Luti
Contributors (student)....Tom Dempsey
.....Michael Hachey
.....Catherine Hillery
.....Marie Rock

Contributors (non-student).Linda Foss
...Charles Demetropoulos
.....Lowry Burgess

Photographer.....Charles Lew
LayoutRobert Orlando
TypingSusan Dosick

Ron Hayes has asked that the following be announced:
Half the money from the Six Hour Steal Art Auction went to the artists, the other half went to the Exhibition Committee which will use it for the purpose of obtaining outside exhibitions for Mass. Art student artists and for bringing outside artists' exhibitions to Mass. Art.

EDITORIAL

The information channels at Mass. Art, including the Administration and the Student Government Association, have been notorious for their habit of turning issue-finding at the college into a greased-pig hunt. This has not really changed as a result of the new order in the college's hierarchy. The Paper has hesitated to chastise the new administration, first, because most of its acts have undoubtedly been improvements over those of the past and, second, because this administration may well be dictatorial against its own will; it may simply be absorbing the power that other bodies within the college, particularly the student body, refuse to claim and put to use. Nevertheless, it would be easy for the power holding few, no matter how honorable their intentions, to slip into the Star Chamber system we have witnessed in Mass. Art's past. Care must be taken on all levels to prevent the "good behavior" we are currently urged to exercise from slipping quietly into a willingness to be repressed. The opportunity for future financial prosperity and outward prestige, no matter how luring, is not worth cowardice of this sort.

The new Mass. Art ideology has been given its grace period. It now seems fair to vocalize some of the undercurrent apprehensions about recent college decisions. (A strong ideology is never weakened by criticism.) Though the following are offered in the spirit of inquiry and not inquisition, bear in mind that the answers they require are too momentous to be gilded by grand old American evasive politics.

1. Concerning the hiring of new teachers: By what method were Dean McGavern, Harris Barron, and Frank Siccone chosen to go to Washington D.C. on January 28th-30th to interview potential new teachers? (We are not questioning the ability of these men to perform the job, but rather the process by which they were chosen.)

2. Concerning the proposal for Faculty members to join a union: Who objects to this? It seems that the most threatening thing unionization could do to the Faculty is protect them. Just how threatening is this?

3. Concerning tenure: Tenure has been used to choke students with mediocre teaching. If it were abolished, its absence could be used to choke the progressive dissent of "misbehaving" teachers, witch-hunt style. Also, lack of tenure could discourage good teachers from considering jobs at Mass. Art. Assuming we have learned our lesson from the Era of the Tenured Ostrich, can we afford the consequences of abolishing this law?

4. Concerning the bill before the state legislature to fuse Mass. Art with the University of Massachusetts: Is this really so unthinkable? In the long run, it might give us more freedom, interdisciplinary studies and students, financial support, energy to devote to art instead of good behavior.

5. Concerning the "all-college constitution": What is it specifically, including all advantages and risks?

These questions and related comments' (not answers) are based on what little the Paper has been able to discern about the issues. Few people have access to the facts behind these issues, and those who do, it seems, are not willing to shed the tiresome rhetoric long enough to expose what really is going on here. This is extremely frustrating to the staff of the Paper; it forces us to resort to writing an entertainment sheet. Moreover, it is unlikely that a stagnant Student Body will budge from its lethargy when what lies beyond its lethargy appears to be a vacuum. The Paper must be regarded as a viable means of communication by those who hold the "news"; otherwise we are left to assume that the "news" is considered too inflammatory in our hands by those who dole it out.

We understand that the issues raised here are not seen with their full implications. We invite anyone who can discuss them beyond peripheral gossip to enlighten us.

Barbara Du Val

M. Rock

The socio-political spirit which has characterized the Mass Art student body last fall seems to have departed to the nether regions, which prompts me to ask: Is The Student Body Dead? Those who participated in the Six Hour Steal Art Auction will heartily testify that the Student Body has certainly shown signs of some kind of activity (the "activity" may be left to your discretionary imagination) yet even these students who exhibited were involved probably because there was a personal profit for each of them, e.g. the exposition of their works to the public, which partially satiates a desire for fame, and also the receipt of one half the monetary value placed on the art item.

The spirit of the Student Body, for the majority, has been smothered by indirect involvement in the college's political activities, e.g. a few student representatives on committees instead of direct involvement by a plurality of students as in the clean-up, paint-in of last fall. Some students may dismiss this inactivity as the same apathetic leprosy which has decayed the Mass. Art. Student Body for generations, they may defend the involvement as being part of the "artistic personality". Some students claim to be artists and consequently they ask why else would they be at an art school if not just to develop their own artistic abilities. They come to class, learn technique and skills with which to produce art objects, they produce the art objects and, hopefully, they develop aesthetic judgement. Some do not realize that the learning should not stop after the class period, after the homework has been done, but that it should continue into the outside social life which is for what the extra-curricular activities at Mass. Art are supposed to prepare the student.

Mass. Art does have a minority of students active in the Student Mobilization Committee, the drama club, dance programs, exhibitions and the newspaper, but this is a very small minority. The rest of the student body should participate, should reactivate itself. Where are the clean-up paint-ins, the S.D.S., the Black Panther Party?

Of course, unknown to me, Mass. Art could be running amuck with underground revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces desperately struggling for control of the student populace, but I am sure that, unfortunately, this is only my imagination which is active and not the students at Mass. Art.

Marie Rock

January 28th, 29th and 30th were the dates that college representatives Harris Barron, David McGavern, and Frank Siccone, chosen by President Nolan, spent most of their time interviewing applicants for nine tentative positions for Mass. Art's faculty at the fifty-eighth annual meeting of the College Art Association of America Conference in Washington D.C.

In the process of interviewing, our representatives accumulated a list of about two-hundred and seventy-five applicants. During the Conference, which Dean McGavern described as "a real flesh market", they were only able to see one hundred and thirty of these people.

No definite decisions were made about the hiring since there are applicants being interviewed from the Boston vicinity and the existence of the positions depends upon the Board of Trustees's willingness to grant money for the jobs.

The positions are (tentatively) for a Three Dimensional instructor, a sculptor, a film maker, an environmental designer, a teacher of related sciences, a painter, an art educator, and an art historian.

Marie Rock

The Administration has implored the Board of Trustees and the Massachusetts Legislature for an emergency fund of twelve thousand dollars for repairing the leaking roofs in the main building. No definite decision to grant the money has yet been made.

Marie Rock

Anyone who has been close to the major political trends of the 60's must view with only half-hearted enthusiasm the recent popularity of the environmental issue. Frightening as the crisis predictions are, one has the uneasy feeling that the issue involves a symptom rather than a disease; and with typically American ingenuity the media are building toward a resolution which deals only with the emotional energies of the situation rather than the root cause. We Americans are used to dealing with real problems by emotional catharsis, by self-flagellation, which, having dealt with the appropriate half-truths, can be set aside for the next burning issue.

The war is being scaled down and "Vietnamized" to supposedly tolerable levels; political radicals are being kept busy with legal defenses, and if they happen to be Black, with calculated extermination. No-knock laws, preventive detention, reversal of integration are all being accomplished while liberals are reduced by the seemingly apolitical issue of environmental pollution.

But will it remain the crusade of the sedate and sane among us? Will ecology remain the preserve of such visionaries as Arthur Godfrey? If ecology means our living symbiotically with our environment, then some very basic restructuring is needed, not the kind of patchwork tokenism that characterizes our political process. Without getting trapped in neo-Marxist rhetoric, we must realize that natural resources will not survive endless exploitation and neglect for profit. The corporations which control most of our resources, human and otherwise, will have to be redirected if survival is to be achieved. While socialism would put the struggle on a higher plane and allow for a more directly managable situation, it cannot solve the problem. The Soviet Union is hardly an ecological model, for bureaucrats in any system tend to view the world with a very narrow perspective and that perspective is not widened in any but the most revolutionary situations.

Those situations aren't created by efforts which leave unchanged very basic,

selfish, profit-oriented, or narrowly profession-oriented activity. This is not a struggle that lends itself to gradualism. While the politics of ecology-like those of the war-may be temporarily resolved, the realities of an arrogant, obsolescence-oriented, military-industrial-consumer economy cannot be kept remote from our daily lives.

Public opinion is entirely dependent on people knowing possibilities or options in a given situation. It is in the interest of the new industrial state (communist or capitalist) to keep imaginations limited, to keep creative alternatives to a selectively managable minimum, and to keep apathetic cynicism high. The most encouraging thing is that emerging ecological solutions run counter to the more depressing de-humanization of modern man. Environments which capsulize and insulate us from our neighbors must be broken down. What middle America considers wholly legitimate, personal freedoms must now be regarded as criminal activities. The absolute sanctity of private property, the right to personalized transportation, and the production and promotion of non-essential and ecologically destructive products are indicative of behavioral patterns which have kept us from exploring newer social moralities and freedoms.

Politicians who believe ecology to be as benign an issue as motherhood shall be cruelly betrayed. In treating the problem as a tactical opportunity, politicians from Nixon to McGovern are expecting the same emotional cathartic response from the public which we have demonstrated on war and racism. The way to really deal with these difficulties is just to recognize their interdependence. The next step is far more difficult. It requires that we do two things simultaneously: we must restructure basic institutions which are sustained by these disasters, and secondly we must re-educate ourselves and re-direct our behavior toward a more harmonious relationship with each other and with our environment. The success of one is dependent on the success of the other. One is not comforted by the fact that "Axion cares".

Michael Hachey

ART CAN BE
FUN

TOM DEMPSEY 3/4/70

This questionnaire was printed in the April, 1969 issue of Psychology Today. We would appreciate it if enough students filled it out to make any conclusions we come to representative of the whole college. There will be the usual Appropriately Marked Box near the mailboxes in which to put your responses. PLEASE, resist using the box as trash can, tempting as it may seem. Circle the appropriate number.

DRUGS: QUESTIONNAIRE

Scale:

1. Once or twice a day
2. Once or twice a week
3. Several times a day
4. Once or twice a month
5. Once or twice a year
6. Once or twice only
7. Never

1. Coffee or tea?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

2. Marijuana, hashish, tetrahydrocannabinol (synthetic marajuana)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

3. Sedatives or tranquilizers (phenobarbital, chlorpromazine, sleeping pills, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

4. Tobacco?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

5. Aspirin or other analgesics?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

6. Amphetamine stimulants (Benzadrine, Dexadrine, diet pills, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

7. Alcohol (wine, beer, liquor)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

8. LSD?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

9. Other hallucinogens (peyote or mescaline, psilocybin, STP, 5-HT, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

10. Opiates (Heroin, cocaine, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

11. Coffee or tea?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

12. Marajuana, hashish, tetrahydrocannabinol (synthetic marajuana)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

13. Sedatives or tranquilizers (phenobarbital, chlorpromazine, sleeping pills, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

14. Tobacco?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

15. Aspirin or other analgesics?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

16. Amphetamine stimulants (Benzadrine, Dexadrine, diet pills, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

17. Alcohol (wine, beer, liquor)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

18. LSD?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

19. Other hallucinogens (peyote or mescaline, psilocybin, STP, 5-HT, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

20. Opiates (herion, cocaine, etc.)?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

21. Are you:
1. student
2. teacher

22. If you have used marajuana, what have you usually experienced?
1. Feeling of transcendence; increased awareness of self and reality.
2. Enhanced perceptual awareness; pleasant floating feeling.
3. Little or no effect.
4. Feeling of loss and loneliness; depression and anxiety.
5. Nightmarish illusions; loss of contact with reality; feeling of terror.

23. If you have used LSD, what have you usually experienced?
1. Feeling of transcendence, increased awareness of self and reality.
2. Enhanced perceptual awareness; pleasant, floating feeling.
3. Little or no feeling.
4. Feeling of loss and loneliness; depression and anxiety.
5. Nightmarish illusions; loss of contact with reality; feeling of terror.

24. Some persons, including doctors, & lawyers maintain that marajuana should be legally available, while others oppose this view. How available do you think marajuana should be?
1. Totally prohibited
2. Available only for research
3. Available only by prescription
4. As available as liquor
5. As available as cigarettes
6. No restrictions at all

25. To what extent do you think LSD should be legally available?
1. Totally prohibited
2. Available only for research
3. Available only by prescription
4. As available as liquor
5. As available as cigarettes
6. No restrictions at all

LETTERS

The following are replies
to Leo Abbott's article "Obit."
which appeared two issues ago
in the Paper.

I

To the Editor:

Your readers should know that our golden retriever retrieved my husband from the Merrimac River three miles west of Plum Island where he had been rapidly floating out to sea clinging to his latest painting, "Blue Wave".

We are grateful for your Paper's notice but my husband wishes to point out that the sketchbook Leo Abbott referred to was not that of Giacomo Balla, but the notebook of Giacomo Baltrado, who is now recognized as a pivotal precursor of conceptual art. Signore Baltrado was killed May 17, 1832 while attempting to pilot a conceptual airplane from the apex of the Eiffel Tower. Much was learned from this experiment by subsequent artists, most notably Yves Klein, who, in 1960, flew successfully "sant dans le vide" from a first-story window to the ground, without injury. Additionally, Signore Baltrado's craft, which he jocosely called "the Picture Plane", has often been cited as the first attempt by a major artist to suspend objecthood.¹

Yours sincerely,
Linda Foss

¹ See Michael Fried's essay "Art and Objecthood", Art Forum, Summer, 1967



"The Tower," c. 1900, by Alfred Kubin.



YVES KLEIN

II

TURN-ON TURN-OFF O(R)BITUARY
OR Pay as you go plan -
charge it, go now, pay later -
discount rates.

From well informed and very reliable sources-- "The Medium"--(not to be confused with mediums)--comes the following announcement (revelation) in response to an illusory and not so illuminating report which appeared in the O-BIT column to the effect that a particular "IN"-famously famous party had without any warning or notification left for parts unknown --has now reappeared on the scene--Copley Square--(Mr "of the city"--English translation from the Greek)--Resurrected--but not incarnated in the form of satan (or Satyr as is properly spelled)-- although there's a little devil in everyone, myself not excluded. This announcement is a public service for the edification of that rite and his reeders, "and do not necessarily express the views of the station--opposite viewpoints are welcomed but not encouraged." Incidentally the "last words" are also the "first words" and the list should include everyone else from A to Z other than "M", "D", "R"--starting with A for Albers and "F" (Feininger), "K" (kandinsky), "M"--(Moore, Modigliani, Moore), "N" (Nagy) or Nick-- Picasso and all the way down to Z for Zorba (artistic license prerogative)...oh, I almost forgot El Greco--that is if we are speaking the same language-- namely painting--(not to be confused with "pop", "pot-shot", or "slop". I am told the Greeks had a word for it, for everything and everyone).

Draw your own conclusion ("draw"----pun?)

AQUARIUSCH
D.M.D. IANE-TIKS
SIENT-OLO-G

P.S. its awful to be unable to misspell correctly

(Charles Demetropoulos)

A Tarty And Tasty Retort to Leo, A Bitter Departing Senior

Pity the poor senior, ousted from the secure plastic world of Mass Art and cast into the semi-progressive, semi-liberated world of realism. Consider leaving a community where conceptual art is avant garde and Leo Abbott is King, and then entering a strange land where politicizing is rampant and public educators are pressured to please the majority of the public or lose their jobs. Usually the good educators leave the poor systems and the mediocre educators stay in any school system they can-- which is why, Bitter Departing Senior, the art education department is mainly interested in fostering creativity in any form, whether it is by traditional drawing or otherwise. The A E department strives to develop creativity in the student who has been subjected to both the good and the mediocre educators. Obviously you will not recognize or can not realize this fact. If you have a better formula for teaching art to public high school students, please leave your revolutionary ideas in my mailbox.

Marie Rock



TYPICAL CLASSROOM BUSTLE
AT MASS. ART

REVIEW

A few days ago Karl Linn, an urban designer from MIT was at Mass. Art speaking about his work and ideas to a small group of faculty members, student government and newspaper people. (This has been the second time he's been here but I missed him the first.) He is being considered as a possible new member of our faculty. He would offer an approach to art that I don't think we have here to any extent, and which I think would be quite valuable.

His slides showed the development of his work over a long period of time, the earliest of which were of works done over ten years ago when he was a landscape architect, designing backyards for upper middle class residents of Westchester county. He talked about this early work in a way much like most artists here talk about their work, that is, in terms of formal design, space, and color relationships, technical problems in execution, etc. As his work progressed the considerations expanded; personal sentiment of the client had to be taken into account in one case by not obscuring an incongruent wedding present azalea bush in his client's formal garden. Life styles had to be considered in the case of a client who would not have much time to spend on maintenance. Finally ethics had to be considered, in deciding whether an artist should be spending his time designing rarely used and seldom seen summer homes for a few people who could afford it. He decided he couldn't.

His second period of work was in urban design. He worked on projects to turn vacant city lots into parks, utilizing untrained local volunteer manpower and often local discarded materials. Good Design on a city street is not the same thing as Good Design in a suburban garden. He had to change from an aesthetic where light, color, and space are the primary concerns to one where the desperate needs for privacy, community, and release of aggressions and energy are the primary concerns, and ones which it is much more important to fulfill.

To illustrate this difference in emphasis he showed a slide of a clever wall done for a city park according to the traditional standard of Good Design, which was totally destroyed overnight because it was not suf-

ficiently durable, violent, or functional. In contrast to this was a slide of a playground built entirely of telephone poles (which "stand up to switchblades, at the most they can be turned into totem poles, which is all the better")

Art is not a useful occupation in the usual sense. This is not to say that art can't be justified, but its justification will have to say more than that it gives a very limited number of people with accidentally the same background art tastes a point of unity with each other and with the artist. Similarly it is difficult to justify the making of objects to sell to a limited number of people solely on the basis that they can afford the outrageous price.

No doubt Linn's earlier work was Good Art, and no doubt it communicated to his clients and their lives were made a little better for it. But these are niceties, like salt without food; I think art can have more biological relevance. Survival in cities is a difficult thing...cities create conditions of overcrowding that man, in his present evolutionary state, is not equipped to handle. But being incredibly adaptable, with a little help and good design and planning, we may be able to make survival possible in cities. Societies have always used art to sublimate those drives which were hostile to its survival. Cities need this to an even greater extent. Linn spoke of the violent young in cities as the real, vitally aggressive source of energy; if an artist intends to design for this force he will have to make works that will stand up against this aggression, express it, and be open, like the telephone pole, to further development, even at the end of a switchblade.

Linn's approach to art is new and necessary for Mass. Art. Someone's comment at the end of the talk was that a campus in Chestnut Hill hardly seems consistent with what we should be working toward. This is an interesting point and another chance for a critic to throw in a plug for a merger with U. Mass. It will be ironic if we should decide to start working in urban design at the same time as we move out to a suburban campus.

Elaine Luti

ANTI-WAR CONFERENCE SETS APRIL 15th PLANS

The Student Mobilization Committee National Conference held in Cleveland Feb. 14 and 15, which set plans for mass anti-war demonstrations on April 15, was the largest meeting of the radical movement in history. The fight to keep SMC independent, non-exclusionary, democratic, and single issue was again won at this conference.

The history of the anti-war movement has been not only one of demonstrations, rallies, teach-ins and hundreds of other actions, but also one of a continuous struggle over the means of mobilizing and increasing the mass sentiment against the war in Viet Nam.

Since November 15, 1969, anti-war sentiment has increased due to Nixon's stalling and token measures. The SMC convention on February 14 and 15, 1970, reaffirmed our commitment to mass action based on immediate withdrawal and self determination for Viet Nam.

Anyone interested in helping to make this spring action as successful as possible, please get in touch with the people at our local SMC office...it's a couple of blocks away from Central Square toward MIT: 19 Brookline Street, Cambridge, 491-8030.

Catherine Hillery